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ABSTRACT

The arts deserve a place in education, provided they are properly taught. Humans need art to make their world sensible, find patterns in their experiences, and gain insights into the future. Art, like life, rewards those who grasp new patterns and act on their interpretation of reality. A good education imparts the ability to recognize patterns and act on the resulting information. Economic change and increasing economic pressures are threatening the funding of many arts education programs. Arts educators must, therefore, change their approach to arts education and learn to marry the arts and relevant workplace know-how. If they are properly taught, knowledge of the arts can help equip all students with the know-how needed in the 21st century workplace. This help can come in at least three interrelated forms: (1) experiences in the arts that teach skills that can be transferred to the workplace; (2) knowledge of the arts that enhances effective communication; and (3) an "artful" approach to problem solving. The process of integrating important workplace skills into arts education is evident in the list of workplace competencies identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills that were successfully incorporated into the curriculum of an 8-week theater arts project. (MN)

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ED 434 202

Arts and Earning a Living

by Arnold Packer

Can arts education improve the economic prospects of most students, irrespective of their career choice? Or is learning the arts a "frill" when compared to math or science? A surprising answer can be found by talking to a group of executives, at a rotary club or similar gathering. Ask whether they have used calculus to make an important decision in the last 90 days. Very few hands will be raised. Next, ask if aesthetics have played a part in a judgement affecting their bottom line—whether it be designing their product, packaging, building, or advertising campaign. Almost everyone will raise their hands in affirmation. Unfortunately, you do not know what the answer will be if you ask, further, whether their own arts education helped improve their aesthetic judgement. I conclude, therefore, that *properly taught*, arts deserve a place in education. But, of course, more than economics are at stake.

The Art of Making Sense

Arthur Danto, art critic for *The Nation*, recently referred to new discoveries in France that showed, once again, that humans made great art before they left their caves. "Why," he asked, "are humans built this way?" Why do our genes carry the potential for art-making? Some cognitive scientists say that we are sense-making animals. Remembering the past and conceiving the future allows us to plan and act "human." In a world that seems best explained by Chaos Theory, humans need art to make their world sensible, to find patterns in their experiences and insights into the future.

The Nobel prize-winner Jerome Edelman, in his book "*Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*" describes the evolutionary process that yields animals that make sense out of patterns. Infants of most species learn to distinguish between the edible and the inedible, between prey and predator. Those who quickly make these distinctions survive.

Art, like life, rewards those who grasp new patterns. My wife, Renee Levine, Dean at the Maryland Institute College of Arts, tells a story of seeing a Robert Rauchenberg installation, *The Reef*, at the Museum of Modern Art. Coming early to the show, before anyone else, she saw what appeared to be an incomprehensible hanging of bits of silk material on sticks. She was about to leave, unrewarded by the experience, when others came into the gallery. Their presence set up air currents. The silk began to stir, evoking the languid pattern of sailboats gliding on a lagoon. Eureka!

Renee has never forgotten the feeling of discovering Rauchenberg's intended reef-like pattern. I remember a similar experience watching a dance in Bali, where the performer sought to give form to the animal spirits of the jungle.

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Humans, and other animals, must do more than detect patterns. Survival requires that they act on their interpretation of reality. The eaglet that can see a mouse at a thousand yards but cannot swoop down at blinding speed and grasp his prey will not be around to mate. The entrepreneur that sees the opportunity but does not act on it will not last long either.

The Purposes of Education

A good education imparts the ability to recognize patterns and act on the resulting information. These are the two things that high school graduates should "know and be able to do" But exactly what patterns and actions are important. We can begin to answer that question by reviewing the three purposes of education. Paraphrasing Mortimer Adler, schools should produce sense-making, productive citizens. That is, graduates should be:

- **Good citizens** who vote, obey the laws, and contribute to the public weal.
- **Productive workers** who can earn a decent living.
- **Sense-makers** who can make emotional, philosophical, and aesthetic sense of their surrounding.

Danto used the innateness of art-making as justification for public support of the arts and, presumably, of arts education. If education dollars were to flow to every genetically driven activity, there would be no debate over sex education. We have to look elsewhere to find the public interest in each of the three educational purposes. More to the point, school boards have to find the balance between public and private interests in educating for citizenship, for work, and to the ability to make sense out of one's life.

Most school boards intuitively understand that democracy requires graduates that know and are willing and able to carry out the responsibilities of citizenship. As a result, history is rarely on the chopping block when elected Boards of Education prepare to cut out frills. Making philosophical and aesthetic sense out of life, on the other hand, is a personal matter. Philosophy has mostly disappeared from the high school curricula. Art, in many school districts, is threatened with a similar fate.

Work serves both personal and community purposes. Clearly, individual students benefit if they are prepared to earn a good living. But, in this era of international competition and rapid technological change, making everyone capable of earning a living has taken on a new urgency for the community. Indeed, this incapacity threatens all three educational goals.

More and more Americans cannot make a decent living. The situation began to deteriorate after 1973. Wages for those whose education ended at high school graduation fell from $11.63 an hour in 1973 to $9.92 in 1993 (in 1993$). At the entry level, the median wage of male high school graduates fell about 30% to about $7.00 per hour. The starting wage for similarly educated young women fell 20% to about $6 per hour.

Consider the wage of about $14,000 annually, about what it take to keep a family of four out of poverty. Earning this much requires a job paying $7.00 an hour for 40 hours per week for 50 weeks per year. Now think about the typical male in the years when they are forming families. In the 20 years to 1993, the median wage for all men (combining all educational levels) between the ages of 25 and 34 fell by 25%. As a result, about one-third of all men do not meet the poverty-line standard. Although women's wages have not fallen as much, women still earn even less then men.

The decline has not been spread equally. Although real per capita gross domestic product increased by 29% over the last 20 years, median family income was lower in 1993 than it was in 1979. The arithmetic average increased because the rich got richer but the median, the point that divides the population into two equally-sized groups, fell. As Lester Thurow wrote in the *NY Times*, the tide rose during the last generation but 80% of the boats sank. Edward Wolf, at NYU, found that the top 20% of wealth holders received 99% of the increase in the nation's marketable wealth during the 1980s.

The problem is not that the rich are getting richer, but that 80% are making no gains or falling behind. Americans, especially but not only the young, are facing cut backs in earnings, in health insurance, in pensions, and in home ownership. The country's democracy cannot tolerate it. The political system has gotten mean. Those falling behind are looking for scapegoats, from immigrants to the National Endowment for the Arts and, of course, to the schools.

Implication for Arts Education

This economic discontent has portentous implications for contemporary education and, especially, for arts education. It shows up in every community that debates their educational strategy. On one side of the table sits the business community. In the last ten years they have come to understand that successfully competing in the international and domestic marketplaces demands creative, thinking, problem-solving, employees. (A recent report of the University of Pennsylvania suggests that 10% more education—a little more than a year's additional schooling—translates into an 8.6% increase in productivity, more than twice the gain from 10% more capital equipment.) As a result, employers have grown more interested in education. Unfortunately, all too many executives limit their concerns to a "core" of basic education, emphasizing mathematics and science even more than history or English. The arts are excluded, often designated as a "frill" to be sacrificed in this tough, new, competitive world. Few see the arts as a path to higher corporate performance.

On the other side of a different table sit the arts educators— often insistent that arts education is justified for its own sake. For them, no further conversation is needed, and it is not even appropriate to link the arts with corporate performance. Many resist changing the way they teach the arts. More than a few act as if the many years they have spent acquiring their skills are sufficient justification for maintaining the *status quo*. Arts teachers often fall into the same trap that catches educators in other fields. On the one hand, teachers want **every** student to take

courses in their discipline. On the other hand, they teach as if all of their students will earn their living in the discipline being taught. Yet, only a few graduates of most high schools will be either professional artists, or mathematicians, or scientists, or historians.

Much of education would be well served by returning to the "basics" as defined by Adler. Education must be brought into better alignment with the three purposes noted above (work, citizenship, and sense making). Look at the math curricula, for example. In most high schools, trigonometry takes precedence over statistics. Once upon a time, when surveyors outnumbered statisticians, that may have made sense. Today, understanding statistics is more important, both for citizenship and work. (Would you rather know about median income or a secant?) Fortunately, the new math standards begin to recognize the changing priorities.

Arts and the Paycheck

Dialogue requires both sides to understand the other's legitimate concerns. The two groups— business executives and arts educators— need to sit together at the same table and discuss their common interests. Students have the biggest stake in this conversation. Schools are built to serve students— not businesses or educators. "The result of a school is a student who has learned something and put it to use ten years later" says Peter Drucker. Students need to know that what they learn will be of value to them after the senior prom is a distant memory.

To make this dialogue work, arts educators must understand the nation's concern with economics. Only then will arts educators be able to make the business community understand what the arts have to offer to employers who will be looking for effective workers.

School boards will regard art as a frill if they do not think arts are central to "productive employment." But they are. Students adept in one or more art forms will be better equipped for the high skill, high wage jobs of the 21st century. **Appropriate** artistic knowledge and capabilities will be no less valuable to the subject matter they will learn in science and mathematics. This statement applies to the vast majority of workers; those who will not earn their living as either artists or scientists but, instead, will be computer programmers or nurses or office workers.

Arts education as a path to a larger paycheck? How can this be? Consider four important forces that will be shaping the world of work as the 21st century begins.

- First, **routine blue-collar work is disappearing**. Employment has been falling in manufacturing and increasing in services. Within manufacturing, the number of workers on the production line is diminishing relative to those in support, design and other such jobs. Even production workers are now being cross-trained in many skills so that they can function as members of responsible teams. No longer will workers be hired to perform the repetitive and mindless tasks that Charlie Chaplin ridiculed in *Modern Times*. Tomorrow's jobs will require broad-based workplace know-how. All workers will have to know how to manage resources—something Chaplin surely knew about when he made his films.

Students who learn how to maintain schedules and stay within a budget from the experience of mounting their productions—whether it's theater, dance, a concert or an art exhibition—will be more valuable workers.

- Second, routine mass production is giving way to a **demand for quality**. "Continuous improvement," "total customer satisfaction," and similar slogans are already the hallmark of successful firms in manufacturing (e.g., GE and Motorola) and services (e.g., Federal Express and Ritz-Carlton). These slogans are driving the effort to "re-invent government." These ideas will dominate business philosophy at the turn of the century. Experience in the arts are one of the best ways to learn how to strive for quality and continuous improvement. Every dancer and painter and playwright and musician wants his or her next work to be better than the last. Few ignore the audience, the customer.

- Third, we are **leaving the industrial age and entering the information age**. The arts are the science of the new forms of information. Understanding the cultural and historical context of art has become crucial. What information does color, dance movement, a musical note or a dramatic gesture convey? These are all non-verbal ways to communicate information. Art is probably the most powerful form of communication, conveying in an instant or over few hours what might take years to understand by other means. Great art forever changes its audience's perception of reality. That is why the advertising business is always "borrowing" the products of artists in all four disciplines.

- Fourth, the dominant new technologies will be the **marriage of computers and communication** and the increasing importance of multi-media technology. The *New York Times* recently said that because of new technologies "...a literate person will be expected to be at least as familiar with great images, melodies and rhythms as with great words." Less and less will the economy depend on information transmitted in the dull format of this paper— linear prose on an unadorned page. How much more interesting this would be on CD-ROM in which the arts disciplines could be seen and heard and their role in the workplace shown on moving video. In twenty years (or less) documents such as this will be multi-media presentations, and communicated electronically to its readers. Even today it can be sent by fax or over a modem, by-passing the mail.

Yes, developing the technology will require math and science. But the much larger number of those who will develop multi-media content will find a background in the arts at least as valuable as one in calculus. The marriage of communication and computers—like the shift to a service economy, the demand for quality, and the unfolding of the information age—will make it more important for workers to have a solid background in the arts.

Work-Relevant Arts Standards

The falling wages of the middle class, referred to earlier, are changing education in a number of ways. At the national level, Congress passed the *Goals 2000* and the *School-to-Work Opportunities*

Acts. Teacher groups are developing academic standards and industry groups are developing occupational standards. Some of the academic standards— such as the math standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics— have drawn praise. Others, such as the history standards, have been severely criticized. National standards for the arts have been developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. All of the academic standards have been criticized as being too political and supportive of current teaching, especially where political compromises among the various sub-disciplines are apparent in the standards, as could be the case for science and the arts.

The identified sub-disciplines, in the case of the arts, are dance, music, theater, and the visual arts. The standards, for each of the four, are organized into three categories: creating and performing, perceiving and analyzing, and understanding cultural and historical concepts. Of course, the three go together. Quality production requires the ability to critically perceive and analyze and to understand what has gone before. Those who read the draft of this document (perceiving) and suggested improvements (analyzing) may have done so as part of their professional duties. But the goal was the production of the document. Quality production also requires understanding the cultural and historical context. A painter needs to see paintings as a writer develops by reading. Dramatists, dancers, and musician also need to understand what has gone before and why. To simplify matters let us concentrate on creation and production. Table 1 summarizes the creation and production standards for the 12th grade.

Table 1
CONTENT STANDARDS FOR PRODUCTION AND CREATION IN THE ARTS
(Summarized and paraphrased standards for the 12th grade)

DISCIPLINE	CONTENT STANDARD
Dance	Creatively understand and demonstrate movement and choreographic principles to communicate ideas through the body
Music	Sing and/or play an instrument competently, confidently, and expressively. Improvise, compose, and use notation to express musical ideas.
Theater	Write, act and direct to construct scripts, develop and communicate characters, and interpret and stage dramatic materials. Design and realize the physical requirements and explore he production and management process to stage a work.
Visual Arts	Create visual works, using a range of subject matter and symbols and a variety of media, techniques, and processes to effectively communicate ideas.

Source: National Standards for Education in the Arts: Consortium of National Arts Education Associations.

Relevant Workplace Know-how

As noted before, *Goals 2000* established a Skills Board (NSSB) that is parallel to and coordinated with the academic board (NESIC). A number of industries and occupations are now developing skills standards. The American Electronic Association has issued its first document and a number of others will do so in 1994.

This spring the Congress will pass the companion legislation to *Goals 2000*. Figure 1 illustrates how the two Acts fit together. The figure shows a set of generic workplace skills built on a foundation of knowledge and skills. Table 2 describes this generic "workplace know-how."

Table 2
WORKPLACE KNOW-HOW AS DEFINED BY SCANS

COMPETENCY	DEFINITION
Allocating Resources	Allocating time, money, materials, space and staff.
Interpersonal Skills	Working on teams, teaching, negotiating, leading and working with other cultures.
Information	Acquiring, evaluating, organizing, interpreting and communicating information.
Systems	Understanding, monitoring, correcting, improving or designing systems.
Technology	Selecting, using and troubleshooting technology.

Source: *Learning a Living*, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC, 1992.

The table lists five competencies and a three-part foundation as defined by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills or SCANS. This Commission of employers and educators worked for two years to develop the SCANS definition of workplace know-how. See *Learning a Living*, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington D.C., 1992 The definition has been adopted or recommended by a number of state agencies and is the subject of a National Jobs Task Analysis which will eventually lead to an assessment instrument. At the moment SCANS serves as the basis for at least some of the on-going efforts to define occupational skills standards. Interestingly, the SCANS report specifically noted the relationship of the arts to the SCANS competencies. What is the relationship between the information in Table 1 and that in Table 2?

Marrying the Arts and Workplace Know-How

Properly taught, knowledge of the arts can help equip all youngsters with the know-how needed in the 21st-century workplace. The help can come in at least three inter-related forms:

1. ***Experiences in the Arts* that teach skills that can be transferred to the workplace.** Allocating time, money, space, and staff is common to all the performing arts (see the first column of Table 3, below). A choreographer allocates stage space, a composer must understand timing—indeed a score for music or dance is a complex schedule. Producing a drama or film is a complex exercise involving time, money, space, and staff. The visual artist allocates space on a canvas and the director of a museum or gallery does so when an exhibit is hung.

These same arts-based activities are wonderful ways to teach the technology competency. See the second column of Table 3. The choreographer, when choosing lighting and set design, makes technological choices. So does the composer when he or she selects from the great range of acoustic and electronic instruments. Theater producers also wrestle with the technology to obtain the lighting and set design they want. The visual artist wrestling with multi-media faces similar questions.

The interpersonal skills of working in a team, negotiating, teaching, and leading are prominent in every performance. See the third column of Table 3. Whether as performer, director, conductor, or dance master, the artist is not engaged in a solitary pursuit. Even the visual artist, the loneliest of the group, is occasionally involved in a collaboration.

Table 3
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARTS STANDARDS AND WORKPLACE KNOW-HOW

ARTISTIC EXPERIENCES	CONTENT			MIND-SET	
	Resources	**Technology**	**Interpersonal Skills**	**Information**	**Systems**
Dance	Allocate stage space	Lighting and set design	Work in ensemble, teach	Communicate via body movements	Know how finished work grows
Music	Understand timing	Instruments: acoustic vs. electronic	Negotiate, work in ensemble, conduct	Communicate via sound and notation	Know how various parts fit together
Theater	Allocate time, money and staff for production	Design lighting effects, staging and sets	Work in a cast or on production, teach	Communicate via dialogue and gesture	Move from rehearsal to performance
Visual Arts	Allocate space on a canvas or in a gallery	Select medium, and in some cases, technology	In some forms it requires working on a team, teaching	Communicate via color and form	Put together a multimedia presentation

2. ***Knowledge of the arts* enhances effective communication.** The trial lawyer who has studied Martha Graham and the contract negotiator who knows Shakespeare may not think of their education in these arts as frills that should have been discarded for one more course in trigonometry. The advertising executive may feel the same about understanding the music of Phillip Glass or Steve Reich or the conceptual art of John Baldessari, Doug Huebler, and Jennie Holtzer.

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Unless office workers learn more about what shape and color convey, desk-top publishers will generate more ugly and misleading graphics in the next decade than the world has seen in the last thousand years. The Chief Financial Officer who understands Henry Moore's philosophy of negative space will be prepared to think about how much white space should appear in the annual report. Administrative assistants who have studied Matisse will be equipped when their offices decide that memos will now be done in color. Every social science researcher and every stock analyst who studies Edwards Tufte's books: *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* and *Envisioning Information* will understand "artful" graphs. Tufte, like an artist, does not want people " to ever see the same way again."

Communicating "ideas through the body," expressing "musical ideas," interpreting "dramatic materials," and creating "visual works...to effectively communicate ideas" are all parts of the proposed arts standards. All can help students become effective in the information age (see the fourth column of Table 3).

3. **An *"artful" approach* to problem-solving.** High-performance firms engage in "artful work." Like the artist, these firms strive for quality and search for creative solutions to new problems. For many students, art is the only class where do their personal best, rather than just well enough to pass the exam. For the importance of this experience see *Control Theory*, William Glasser, Harper and Row, New York, NY, 1984 The artistic experience gives the student the opportunity of balancing diverse considerations where there is no single right answer. The weighing of intangibles that is inherent in the process of making or evaluating all forms of art is a more valuable and realistic experience then the typical classroom search for the "right" answer.

The artistic process can be conceived as a system. Systems thinking requires understanding how parts fit together to produce a quality whole. The process requires correcting, monitoring and designing the system to produce quality performance (see Table 2). The artistic experience is a wonderful way to learn this all-important competency of workplace know-how. (See the last column in Table 3.) The choreographer and dancer working together in rehearsals, the string quartet critiquing their last performance before putting on the next one, actors and the director analyzing how a scene affects the overall production, the visual artist working on a piece of sculpture or designing a building are all learning these system disciplines.

How can the arts educator use the experience in the arts, knowledge of the arts, and the artful approach to teach workplace know-how as defined by SCANS? An eight week curriculum leading to a theater performance is one way. As illustrated in Table 4, every step, from selecting the play in weeks #1 and #2 through putting on the performance in week #8, is a means for joining arts and work. Clearly, similar approaches could be used in producing a concert or dance performance or an art exhibit.

SCANS SKILLS LEARNED DURING AN ARTS PROJECT (PRODUCING A THEATER WORK OVER 8 WEEKS)

Week #1: The executive group (director, producer, set designer and costume designer) select three to four plays from which they will choose one in week #2.

	Acquire and evaluate	Organize and maintain	Interpret and maintain	Use computer
Information	Evaluate 20 possible plays in terms of requirements for set, costumes, number and capacity of actors, recent performances in the community and popularity (w/ computer entered data in a data base).			

Week #2: Brainstorming, group decision making to select play and consider treatment (e.g., will it be *Hamlet* in modern dress?)

	Team Participation	Teach	Lead	Negotiate	Work with other cultures
Interpersonal	Explain position, persuade, negotiate compromises, all with a culturally diverse team (repeats in different form during following weeks of project).				

Week #3: Develop schedule and budget, select actors and support staff, block stage.

	Time	Money	Space	Staff
Allocate Resources	Plan the tasks that need to be accomplished to put the performance on in week #8. Establish rehearsal schedule and the things that go with it (sets, make-up, and costumes for dress rehearsal). Develop a budget (w/ computer use scheduling/budgeting software). Run tryouts for actors, review resumes for support staff (who will do make-up, paint sets, publicity, etc.).			

Week #4: Set, lighting, and costume design.

	Select	Use	Maintain	Troubleshoot
Technology	Determine technology for each of the three elements. Acquire Technology and/or start building/making each (w/ computer consider graphics software). Use technology. Develop way to maintain equipment, sets and costumes.			

Week #5: Team decision-making and Guidance after First Rehearsal.

	Team Participation	Teach	Lead	Negotiate	Work with other cultures
Interpersonal	Communicate vision to other actors and support staff. Come to an agreement about the ways the characters will be realized. Come to an agreement about set, lighting, costumes and make-up.				

Week #6: Performances.

	Understand	Monitor	Correct	Design
Systems	Understand and communicate what represents a quality performance. Systems Develop process for review and critique (note changes, check that changes have been incorporated into work). See to it that process is working. Change process to make it more effective.			

Week #7: Publicity.

	Acquire and evaluate	Organize and maintain	Interpret and maintain	Use computer
Information	Examine past publicity campaigns at this school and campaigns for this play when it was on Broadway. Organize message. Design posters, letters, media presentation. Determine coverage needed and implement publicity campaign.			

Week #8: Performances.

	Understand	Monitor	Correct	Design
Systems	Make a quality performance, review for possible improvements after each performance, make improvements for next performance.			

The Need for Change: Producing "Artful Work"

Firms at the forefront of change are "re-engineering" their corporations. "At the heart of business re-engineering lies the notion of discontinuous thinking—identifying and abandoning the outdated rules and fundamental assumptions..." M. Hammer and J. Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation*, HarperCollins NY, NY, 1993 This sounds like the definition of art, which forever changes its audiences' perception of reality. Re-engineering requires "artful work."

Employers who carry weight on their states' and communities' schools boards should realize that the arts are the best places in the curriculum to learn discontinuous thinking. It is in employers' interest to have arts education strengthened in the curriculum for all students so that the arts are

given the same weight as physics or trigonometry. They must tell the school boards that their employees are just as likely to use the skills they learn in dance, music, theater, and the visual arts as they are to call upon their knowledge of Newtonian physics or mathematics.

Arts educators must also change. Change is taking its toll on all professionals. Those who worked alone are learning to work in teams; those who had never used any technology more sophisticated then the fountain pen are learning to use E-mail and spreadsheets and graphics packages. Those brought up in one culture are learning about others. Educators must help students learn how to do "artful work," whether that work is nursing or office work or work on the factory floor. They must find time in their classes for students to reflect on the message of Table 3 and Table 4.

Arts educators also must reflect on their roles and on the true purposes of education. It is not to learn music or dance or physics or trigonometry. These are only means to an end; to preparing for responsible, productive, fulfilled adulthood. For most of us, these ends require a decent job. Arts educators must be able to demonstrate the connection between what they teach and their students' ability to earn a living. Moreover, they must be able to communicate that connection—the one shown in Table 3 and Table 4—to the parents of their students, to the business community, and to the school board. The taxpayers must see the relationship between putting on a school play and running a business convention or playing in a quartet and working on a product design team or writing a score and writing a multi-media computer program or dancing and making a sales presentation.

Many of you have seen the public service announcement (PSA) for arts education that the American Council for the Arts produced for the South Carolina Arts Commission when Secretary of Education Riley was their Governor. The main character recalls playing in a tomato suit in the school play and relates it to his ability to make a business presentation. It is that sort of thinking that must, in part, motivate those who wish to make all of our students literate in the arts. The other parts of the motivation—learning art for its own sake—goes without saying to those educators who have devoted their lives to artistic expression.

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